

Iowa Outdoors

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
www.iowadnr.gov

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1. Flooding Impacts State Parks Across Iowa Heading in to Camping Kick-off Weekend
2. For Clear Lake's Most Popular Game Fish – the Bite is On – by Lowell Washburn [electronic photo available]
3. Capitol Peregrine Initiates Nesting
4. Spring Goose Production Down [electronic photos available]
5. DNR Volunteers Honored During National Volunteer Week
6. Facts About New Trapping Procedure for Emerald Ash Borer in Iowa
7. Prairie Rescue Event Set for Big Creek State Park
8. Still Time to Order Tree and Shrubs Seedlings

FLOODING IMPACTS STATE PARKS ACROSS IOWA HEADING IN TO CAMPING KICK-OFF WEEKEND

Heavy rains and flooding conditions caused some campsite, road and trail closures at a number of Iowa state parks.

The Iowa DNR has a list of impacted parks on its website at www.iowadnr.gov then click on State Parks, then click on Current News, Lake Levels and Construction Updates, then on Flooding Updates. It is also available at www.reserveiaparks.com then click on pink Park Notices/Reservation Closures button at the bottom of the page.

The lists will be updated as necessary. The following is the list of parks impacted by flooding or high water.

George Wyth State Park

George Wyth State Park is planning to reopen April 30. For updated information contact the park office at 319-232-5506.

Backbone State Park

Backbone State Park is experiencing flash flooding. The East, West and North Gate entrances and boat ramp are closed to vehicle traffic. The trout streams and shelters are

unusable. The cabins, South Lake campground and Six Pines campgrounds are unaffected. For more information call the park office 563-924-2527.

Fairport State Recreation Area

Due to river conditions and campground flooding at Fairport State Recreation Area, many campsites will be unusable through May 19. Reservable sites 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are still usable at this time. Walk-in campsites are also available. Check the website for more information or contact the park office at 563-263-4337

Pikes Peak State Park

The boat ramp at Sny Magill, 5 miles south of Pikes Peak State Park on the Mississippi River, is closed due to flooding. For updated information contact the park office at 563-873-2341.

Palisades-Kepler State Park

Due to heavy rain and the rising Cedar River, the boat ramp at Palisades-Kepler State Park is flooded and closed. Call park office at 319-895-6039 for updated information.

Lake Macbride State Park

Due to high water and flooding on the Coralville Reservoir, the Lake Macbride Dam Road that leads to the Lake Macbride Dam area, the Fisheries Station and the Coralville Reservoir boat ramp, is closed. The road will most likely be closed for at least three weeks and possibly longer depending upon upcoming rainfall. For updated information contact the park office at 319-624-2200.

Ledges State Park

The canyon road at Ledges State Park is closed due to flooding and is not expected to reopen before the weekend; however, if the situation changes, park staff will open the canyon road. For updated information contact the park office at 515-432-1852.

Wapsipinicon State Park

The lower road along the Wapsipinicon River in Wapsipinicon State Park is closed and will remain closed through this weekend. For updated information contact the park office at 319-462-2761.

Volga River State Recreation Area

The trails at Volga River State Recreation Area will be closed this weekend due to heavy rains last week. The trails have sustained some damage from the heavy rains and are currently too wet to use. Dry weather and trail repairs are needed before the trails are ready for use. The rest of the area is open including the regular campground and picnic areas next to the lake.

Lake of Three Fires State Park

Lake of Three Fires Equestrian trails will remain closed for this weekend due to the wet weather.

Brushy Creek State Recreation Area

All trails south of the South day-use area will be closed. The rest of the trails will be weather dependant.

Stephens State Forest

The trails at Stephens Forest remain closed due to wet conditions and extensive damage from last winter's ice storm. The trails will likely be closed through this weekend.

Elk Rock State Park

Storm damage at Elk Rock State Park has been cleaned up, but due to the wet weather, the equestrian trails will remain closed.

Nine Eagles State Park

The equestrian trails at Nine Eagles State Park are closed due to wet conditions.

Waubonsie State Park

The equestrian trails at Waubonsie State Park are closed due to heavy rains.

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WALLEYE MANIA

FOR CLEAR LAKE'S MOST POPULAR GAME FISH - THE BITE IS ON

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

CLEAR LAKE – One of my annual outdoor goals is to hook a walleye on the very first cast of the spring fishing season. Although I've never been successful at achieving the dream, I came pretty close this year.

I didn't begin fishing until last week, and the walleye spawn was approaching its peak as I waded into the chilly waters of Clear Lake. The sky was overcast and the shoreline was littered with rock --- prime conditions for shallow water, early season spawners.

Other anglers were already on the scene, including my son Matt. Wading in that direction I was pleased to discover that, in less than 15 minutes of fishing, he had already taken two legal walleye and had just released a sub-legal, 13-incher.

Hooking a lively fathead minnow unto a 1/16 ounce jig head, I made the season's first cast. Nothing. Second cast, ditto. Third cast, same result. On the fourth cast I felt a hard rap just as the bait hit bottom. The pull felt good and, within seconds, the season's first walleye --- a not quite legal 13 1/2-incher --- was firmly in hand.

Returning the fish to the water, I quickly resumed the quest. Three casts later, the rod bent again. This time the fish measured 15 inches. Hungry for a meal of fresh fish, I lost no time in stringing the walleye up.

Almost immediately, Matt hooked another keeper walleye. A minute later, the guy standing to the right of me [we hadn't had time for proper introductions yet] tied into a very nice 19-incher. While distracted by the activity surrounding me, I had another hit but missed the fish. A half dozen casts later, I hooked and landed another 15-incher.

People were getting off work now and the angling crowd was growing rapidly. Everyone was catching fish. I could tell it was going to be a rough night for the walleyes.

"Although the open water season is just beginning, it's already been a good year at Clear Lake," says DNR District Fisheries Biologist, Scott Grummer. "It was a late spring, and as soon as the ice was out anglers began catching fish. From ice out until present, angler success on walleye has been excellent."

The scenario is pretty much typical for this time of the year at Clear Lake. Fish are concentrated into shallow rocky habitats with male walleye [bucks] comprising the lion's share of the harvest. Although artificial baits will produce fish, most anglers are currently sticking to the fail safe, no frills jig & minnow combo.

"Although there have been some bigger fish taken, most of the walleyes being caught are in the 14-inch to 18-inch class, which is very typical during the spawn," says Grummer. "Once the spawn is over and fish disperse to other habitats, we'll start to see some of the larger females come into the bag."

With a harvest of 11,000 legal walleyes, the 2007 open water fishing season was "above average" for Clear Lake. Biologists say anglers can expect more of the same during 2008.

"Right now, Clear Lake has very good populations of 'keeper' walleyes from multiple year classes. There is another strong year class of sublegal fish that should hit fourteen inches sometime toward the end of this year's growing season. We're predicting another very good summer of walleye fishing at Clear Lake," said Grummer.

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CAPITOL PEREGRINE INITIATES NESTING

DES MOINES – A female peregrine falcon received a boost in her ability to successfully nest at the Iowa Capitol last week and now occupies a nesting tray that was installed by Neumann Brothers, Inc. employees.

Peregrines do not construct nests, but make a scrape in the dirt or rocks on suitable nest sites. The ledge that she has centered on to nest is sloped to shunt rainwater from the building. A nest tray containing pea gravel will ensure any eggs will not roll away from the ledge and aid in keeping eggs dry.

One egg was laid last week on Capitol's west side but rolled from ledge and was destroyed. It was at this time that she returned to east side and initiated nesting activity at ledge that received the nest tray.

The falcon first appeared at the State Capitol in autumn 2004. Curt Small with Neumann Brothers, Inc. first noticed the bird, while completing refurbishment activities at the Capitol. "We heard her calling repeatedly from the east portico above the stairway. It was an unbelievable sight when she took a pigeon right out of the air," he said.

The falcon was identified as a young-of-the-year from NSP Riverside Plant, near Minneapolis, and banded that year by Bob Anderson with Raptor Research Project, in Decorah. The falcon's mate is an unbanded male.

"There have been two nest boxes provided this female at the Capitol and the Lucas buildings, but she was not enticed to those positions," said Pat Schlarbaum, wildlife diversity program technician with the Iowa DNR. "She wants to be on the ledge she was first sighted, and we did what we could to provide her a secure nesting opportunity. The nest box locations would have provided easy access to band her young, but that is small consolation, if she can successfully nest at her favorite ledge."

Tray placement was accomplished by Neumann Brothers, Inc. employees Curt Small, Scott Parker, and Lyle Wicks; Capitol building managers Mark Willemssen and Tim Ryburn; Capitol architects: Scotney Fenton and Scott Allan with RDG Planning and Design; Jack Leachman with Leachman Lumber provided materials; and Mark Ohnemus with United Rentals coordinated platform lift to accomplish nest tray placement.

Around the state there were 10 other territories last year with 23 young produced at eight successful nest sites.

For more information, contact Pat Schlarbaum, Iowa DNR, wildlife diversity program technician, at 515-432-2823 or cell 712-330-0526.

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SPRING GOOSE PRODUCTION DOWN

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

For Iowa's homegrown Canada goose flock, the hatch is on. Weather-wise, it's been a tough spring, and wildlife biologists are predicting an overall downturn in this year's statewide goose production. The culprit, they say, is recent widespread flooding that destroyed large numbers of Canada goose nests.

"This spring, we received some very untimely rains that will certainly have a negative impact on this year's goose hatch," said DNR Waterfowl Biologist, Guy Zenner. "What's really unfortunate is that the heavy rains and flooding occurred just a week before the peak hatch. If those rains would have held off for just a few days it would have given most birds time to hatch. The flooding would not have had near the impact on hatched goslings."

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DNR VOLUNTEERS HONORED DURING NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

DES MOINES — In observance of National Volunteer Week, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources is sending out a huge 'thank you' to its statewide volunteer team.

Actions speak louder than words, and in this case so do the numbers. On an annual basis, Keepers of the Land, the volunteer program with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, assists more than 100,000 Iowans find rewarding volunteer opportunities across the state. These volunteers, in turn provide an estimated \$2.4 million of donated service, based upon the Independent Sector's \$14.93/ hour valuation of volunteer service in Iowa.

For Keepers of the Land director Merry Rankin, this week is very significant. Rankin works to connect citizens to natural resource volunteer opportunities and is always inspired by their response and dedication.

"It's such a pleasure to work with such incredible individuals," Rankin said. "Their efforts make an invaluable and long-lasting impact to their communities, the DNR, and Iowa's natural resources."

"Volunteer to Change the World," this year's National Volunteer Week theme, is sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation. National Volunteer Week began April 27 and continues until May 3. This national recognition for volunteers initially began as part of an executive order by President Nixon in 1974 as a means to celebrate volunteerism across the USA. Since that year, every US President and various public officials have signed proclamations and made statements in honor and support of the annual celebration.

Visit www.keepersoftheland.org for more information on volunteer opportunities, recruiting volunteers right now, around the state. Some projects include a statewide prairie rescue effort, Spring Operation ReLeaf and Plant Some Shade events continuing through May, and Project AWARE which is gearing up to clean the Cedar, Shell Rock and Winnebago Rivers this summer, June 14-21.

For more information, contact Merry Rankin at (515) 281-0878 or at Merry.Rankin@dnr.state.ia.us. Note to editors: Please contact us to find out about local volunteer projects in your area.

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FACTS ABOUT NEW TRAPPING PROCEDURE FOR EMERALD ASH BORER IN IOWA

To help in the detection of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in the state of Iowa, the collaborative partners of the Iowa Department of Agriculture, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa State University Extension, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Plant Protection and Quarantine, have rolled out a new survey initiative to look for the exotic, ash tree-killing insect. EAB researchers have developed a new survey tool, a purple prism trap and lure that will be used in Iowa and in 45 other states throughout the country.

EAB survey crews will place nearly 1,200 traps in ash trees at strategic locations throughout the Iowa. The purple traps are covered in glue and contain a lure to attract and catch any EAB adult beetles that are present in the state. Program officials will monitor the traps throughout the summer and will remove the traps in the fall.

Purple Trap Specifics:

- The purple prism traps are made from corrugated plastic, roughly 1-foot wide by 2-feet long.
- The outside of the traps will be coated with non-toxic glue and will be hung in ash trees or attached to the trunks.
- The traps will contain a lure (Manuka oil) that is attractive to EAB adult beetles.
- The traps will be monitored and insect specimens will be collected.
- The purple traps pose no risk to humans, pets or wildlife; however, the non-toxic glue can be extremely sticky and messy if touched.

If a suspect beetle is found on a trap, it will be sent to a U.S. Department of Agriculture for identification. If you see a purple trap on the ground or damaged, please contact the State Entomologist's Office [(515)-725-1470] or USDA Plant Protection and Quarantine [(515)-285-7044] to report it. You may also call the USDA EAB Hotline at 1 (866) 322-4512.

Citizens and municipalities are encouraged to assist in EAB detection and education by allowing trap placement on their property. Additional information on the EAB survey program is available online at www.PurpleEABsurvey.info.

Iowa contacts:

Iowa Department of Natural Resources – Tivon Feeley [Tivon.Feeley@dnr.iowa.gov; (515) 281-4915]

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship – Robin Puisner [Robin.Puisner@Iowaagriculture.gov; (515) 725-1470]

Iowa State University Extension – Mark Shour [mshour@iastate.edu; (515) 294-5963]

USDA APHIS PPQ – Rob Meinders [robert.d.meinders@aphis.usda.gov; (515) 285-7044]

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PRAIRIE RESCUE EVENT SET FOR BIG CREEK STATE PARK

Volunteers of all ages will help with a prairie rescue event at Big Creek State Park starting at 9 a.m., on May 3.

Information on this and other rescue events is available at www.inhf.org/prairierescue2008.htm. The events are also listed on the Iowa DNR Keepers of the Land *events calendar* at www.iowadnr.com/volunteer/index.html.

This is an annual event coordinated by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with support from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, county conservation boards and private conservation groups.

Questions may be directed to Whitney Davis of the Iowa DNR at 515-281-6271, or Whitney.Davis@dnr.iowa.gov

Today, only about 1/1,000th of Iowa's prairie remains. These small prairie remnants, even those in public ownership, are still at risk from encroaching species and the lack of historic fire and grazing patterns.

Prairie Rescue volunteers will clear invasive species such as brush and small trees from the sites. Experts will conduct controlled burns on some of the prairies. These efforts will allow adults and kids to experience the prairies Iowa's earlier generations saw, while preserving that experience for future generations.

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STILL TIME TO ORDER TREE AND SHRUBS SEEDLINGS

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources State Forest Nursery has good supplies of trees and shrubs for reforestation, wildlife habitat or to control soil erosion on an acreage or farm and there is still time to order conservation trees and shrubs. The recent rains are creating favorable planting conditions and planting success is best if completed by mid to late May.

“We have excellent supplies of native red, white, bur and swamp oak, walnut, dogwood, and many other species for this spring’s planting season,” said Roger Jacob, nursery manager for the Department of Natural Resources. “These native trees and shrubs are adapted to Iowa’s extremes in weather, to Iowa’s soils and provide superior wildlife habitat.”

Planting seedlings for conservation purposes need not be expensive. State Forest Nursery conservation trees and shrubs are for sale at the cost of production. Prices range from \$25 per 100 plants for evergreen species such as white pine up to \$45 per 100 plants for hardwood trees and shrubs like the oaks and redosier dogwood. The minimum order is 500 plants.

If 500 plants are too much, try the “Create a Wildlife” packet that consists of up to 4 different species of your choice in units of 50 plants each for a total of 200 plants. This packet will cover about one quarter to one-half acre of land for \$90, plus \$10 for shipping. For those with a large backyard consider trying our Song Bird Packet of 20 trees and shrubs for \$20, with shipping to your door being included.

For more information or to order conservation trees and shrubs, call 1-800-865-2477 or www.iowatreeplanting.com Contact Roger Jacob, 515 233-1161
roger.jacob@dnr.iowa.gov

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